Introduction to
Library of Congress Genre/Form Terms for Library and Archival Materials

In 2007 the Library of Congress began a project to develop genre/form terms, which describe what a work *is*, rather than what it is *about*, as subject headings do. This introduction provides a brief history of the development of genre/form terms at LC. It then describes the characteristics and structure of *Library of Congress Genre/Form Terms for Library and Archival Materials* (LCGFT), and the rules for application.

HISTORY

Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) has for many decades included headings that denote what a work *is* rather than what it is *about* (e.g., **Horror films**; **Detective and mystery stories**; **Constitutions**). While these headings refer to genres and forms of works, that information is often not made explicit to library users, through notes, computer displays, or otherwise.

Since the 1980s the Library of Congress has supplemented LCSH by developing discipline-specific guides and thesauri of genre/form terms, including for example the *Thesaurus for Graphic Materials*, compiled by the Prints and Photographs Division; the *Radio Form-Genre Guide* and *Moving Image Genre-Form Guide*, both compiled by the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division (MBRS); and Martha M. Yee's *Moving Image Materials: Genre Terms*, which was coordinated by MBRS and published by LC's Cataloging Distribution Service. Additionally, other discipline-specific thesauri developed at the Library of Congress, such as the American Folklife Center's *Ethnographic Thesaurus* and the *Children's Subject Headings*, include genre/form terms.

The Library of Congress has also used genre/form thesauri compiled by third parties, such as *Guidelines on Subject Access to Individual Works of Fiction, Drama, Etc.*, which is published by the American Library Association, and the *Art & Architecture Thesaurus*, developed by the Getty Art History Information Program and published by Oxford University Press. The LC online catalog also includes genre/form terms from *Medical Subject Headings (MeSH)*, a system that is developed and maintained by the U.S. National Library of Medicine.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The development of *Library of Congress Genre/Form Terms for Library and Archival Materials* (LCGFT) began in 2007. The project was undertaken at the behest of the library community, which for many years had recognized the utility and value of such terms and had long petitioned the Library of Congress to create a genre/form thesaurus, along with policies for its use. LC's intent is to develop a dynamic, multi-disciplinary body of genre/form terms that is cohesive, unified, intuitive, and user-friendly.

Early on, the Policy and Standards Division (PSD) determined that each discipline should be handled as a separate project. This approach allows for incremental policy changes as issues are resolved. It also enables the terms in a particular discipline to be rolled out as a group, thereby causing less confusion among catalogers, reference librarians, and users than would occur if the terms were released piecemeal. Finally, it permits collaboration with individual constituencies, such as associations organized around a particular discipline or user group.

As of January 2015, projects for terms in five areas have been completed: "general" materials (e.g., dictionaries, encyclopedias) moving images (films and television programs), sound recordings (primarily radio programs), cartographic materials, and law.

The moving image project was first. The *Moving Image Genre-Form Guide* (MIGFG) and existing LC subject headings were used as the basis for development. The project served as an experiment to determine and resolve issues that would arise in the creation of genre/form terms. The resolutions to the issues then served as the model for later projects. In September 2007 the first moving image genre/form terms were approved and distributed through the Cataloging Distribution Service.

The second project, for radio program genre/form terms, was begun in late 2007. Based on the *Radio Form/Genre Guide* (*RADFG*) and LC subject headings, this project was smaller than the first, but it helped identify issues that needed to be resolved before terms for additional disciplines were added to LCGFT. The first genre/form terms for radio programs were distributed in early 2008, and the thesaurus has since been expanded to include terms for other non-musical sound recordings, such as **Field recordings** and **Test pressings (Sound recordings)**.

The third project, for terms describing cartographic materials, was begun in early 2009 and was undertaken in cooperation with the Library of Congress' Geography and Maps Division. The first cartography genre/form terms were approved in May 2010. It was with this project that the need for a fully faceted vocabulary – in which each term represents a single concept, and multiple terms are assigned to bring out multiple concepts – became clear. The cartography project was also the first to precipitate changes to LCSH policy, with the cancellation of over a dozen form subdivisions.

Law materials was the fourth project and it was the first in which PSD collaborated with another organization. The American Association of Law Libraries' Classification and Subject Cataloging Policy Advisory Working Group formed a task force to develop the law vocabulary, using William Benemann's *Genre Terms for Law Materials* as its starting point. Policy specialists in PSD, law specialists from throughout LC, and the task group then negotiated some fine points of terminology and scope before the terms were incorporated into LCGFT in November 2010.

Terms for general library materials constituted the fifth group to be added. The ALA Subject Access Committee's Subcommittee on Genre/Form Implementation (SGFI) formed the General Terms Working Group in 2012. The Working Group developed a list of desired terms, which were then negotiated by PSD and members of the Working Group. The terms were incorporated into LCGFT in January 2015.

As of January 2015, there are four additional ongoing projects, and they are all collaborations between LC and other library organizations. The terms for music are being developed in partnership with the Music Library Association. LC's partner for the religion terms is the American Theological Library Association. SGFI has partnered with LC to develop terms for literature, and, last but not least, the Art Libraries Society of North America is partnering with LC to develop terms to describe works of art.

Each project is considered finished when the commonly used terms for a given discipline are incorporated into LCGFT and are implemented at LC. As additional terms are needed, they may be proposed by LC catalogers and by members of the Subject Authority Cooperative (SACO) program. Likewise, LC catalogers and SACO members may propose revisions to existing terms.

CHARACTERISTICS

Library of Congress Genre/Form Terms for Library and Archival Materials is a stand-alone vocabulary that may be used in conjunction with any subject heading system and descriptive cataloging code. It was initially part of LCSH, but was formally separated from it in May 2011. LCGFT diverges significantly from LCSH in its scope as well as in the format and application of its terms, but it does retain a fundamental characteristic of LCSH: literary warrant. New genre/form terms, or revisions to existing terms, may be proposed as needed for new cataloging, and are based on information provided in the works being cataloged as well as on research.

Terms that describe works and expressions (as defined in *Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records*) are eligible for inclusion in LCGFT. Therefore, the terms indicate the intellectual or artistic expression of the work and also the original mode of issuance, where applicable. The physical carrier of the manifestation being cataloged is indicated through descriptive elements. For example, a television series released on DVD is assigned genre/form terms indicating that it is a television program, not a DVD. There are a few exceptional manifestation-level terms in LCGFT (e.g., **Video recordings for the hearing impaired**), but they should not be considered precedents.

LCGFT is also limited to terms describing genres and forms. Genre relates to content and may be defined as a category of artistic or literary composition that has a distinctive style and consistent themes, plot formulas, and character types. Genre is distinct from subject, although they can be closely related. Form refers to the format or purpose of a category of works and is independent of the content. A work may be a suspense film (the genre) that is three-dimensional (the form) and depicts a heist (the subject).

Several other characteristics of works and expressions are closely related to forms, but are not eligible for explicit inclusion in LCGFT: ethnicity or nationality of the creator or producer; intended audience; time period of creation; setting; the popularity of the work (e.g., blockbusters); and in the case of music, the medium of performance (e.g., trumpet). These characteristics may occasionally be implicit within a genre or form. For example, time period of creation is implicit in **Rubble films**, which refers to films produced in the years after World

War II and that featured the exteriors of burned-out buildings. As with the manifestation-level terms, LCGFT currently includes some terms that are technically out of scope, such as **Children's films**, and should not be considered precedents.

COMPONENTS OF ENTRIES

Authorized terms

Each LCGFT term consists of a single genre or form, and may consist of a single word, as in **Constitutions**, **Encyclopedias**, and **Globes**, or a phrase, as is the case with **Handbooks and manuals**, **Horror films**, and **Road maps**. Terms may include a parenthetical qualifier when it is necessary to distinguish between homonyms (e.g., **Thrillers (Motion pictures)**; **Thrillers (Radio programs)**).

All terms are established in English unless the foreign-language term has been borrowed into English, or the foreign-language term is unique to the language of the work being cataloged and cannot be found in English-language reference sources. **Heimatfilme**, for example, are German films that are generally referred to by their German descriptor in English-language sources.

Terms are always presented in natural-language order, and the significant word usually appears in the first position, such as in **Administrative regulations** (not *Regulations, Administrative*). Rarely, the first word is a generic word to match common usage (e.g., **Televised baseball games**).

The preference is for broader, rather than narrower, terms. Most literary and artistic works provide only a broad indication of their genres and forms. Broader terms can therefore expedite cataloging and also serve the users, who do not have to search several very narrow sub-genres or forms to find materials of interest to them. There are times in which a narrow term is warranted and may be proposed however, such as in the case of **Coutumes**, compilations of French medieval customary law.

Used For (UF) references

Sometimes called "see" references, UF references display the equivalence relationship. They lead the user from a non-preferred term to the authorized term. Under the heading referred to, the notation is UF, but if the user searches for the non-preferred term, a USE reference is generated.

UF references may refer from a synonym or provide a different form of the authorized term. The latter is most commonly represented with inverted references, which bring significant words to the front.

UFs may also refer from formerly authorized forms of the term. Occasionally, UFs are made from terms that are not strictly synonymous when it is determined to be impractical to establish separate terms for the concepts. In this situation, the UF generally has a slightly narrower meaning than the authorized term and is called an "upward" UF. UFs may occasionally include a parenthetical qualifier. Foreign-language UFs are not made to English-language terms unless the foreign word or phrase is typically found in English-language reference sources. *Examples:*

Actualités (Motion pictures)
USE Actualities (Motion pictures)
   [French term found in English-language sources]

Adaptations, Radio
USE Radio adaptations
   [Inverted reference to bring the significant word to the front]

Case digests
USE Law digests
   [Synonym]

Catalogues
USE Catalogs
   [Variant spelling]

Informercials
USE Infomercials
   [Synonym]

Legislative amendments
USE Statutes and codes
   [Upward reference]

Long-range navigation charts
USE Loran charts
   [Full form of the acronym]

Radio commercials (Advertisements)
USE Radio commercials
   [Formerly authorized term]

Broader Term (BT) and Narrower Term (NT) references

Broader terms and narrower terms display the hierarchical relationship. Each NT is a class member of the class represented by the BT. BT/NT is a reciprocal relationship, and only the BT is explicitly coded in the MARC 21 authority records. The computer generates the NT references.

The disciplines of cartography, law, moving images, and sound recordings each has a single "broadest term," to which all other terms in the discipline are hierarchically subordinate. Their broadest terms are **Cartographic materials**; **Law materials**; **Motion pictures**; **Television programs**; and **Sound recordings**. Terms for general library materials may have one or more of ten broadest terms: **Commemorative works**; **Creative nonfiction**;

Derivative works; **Discursive works**; **Ephemera**; **Illustrated works**; **Informational works**; **Instructional and educational works**; **Recreational works**; and **Tactile works.** Excepting the broadest terms, every authorized term has at least one BT. *Example:*

Horror films
BT Motion pictures
NT Slasher films
NT Splatter films

Motion pictures
NT Horror films

Slasher films
BT Horror films

Splatter films
BT Horror films

All splatter films and slasher films are by definition horror films (horror films is the class and splatter and slasher films are the class members). However, not all horror films are slasher or splatter films. Likewise, all horror films are motion pictures, but not all motion pictures are horror films.

Terms may occasionally belong to more than one hierarchy, and may even cross disciplines. **Podcasts** belongs to three hierarchies, reflecting the fact that podcasts may originate in different media.

Podcasts
BT Motion pictures
BT Sound recordings
BT Television programs

Flatter, rather than deeper, hierarchies are preferred. The deepest hierarchy currently has four levels: the broadest term and three lower levels. *Example:*

Loran charts
BT Nautical charts

Nautical charts
BT Maps

Maps
BT Cartographic materials

Cartographic materials
  [broadest term]

The strict hierarchies allow all of the terms in a discipline to be found by searching up and down the levels.

Related Term (RT) references

Related terms display the associative relationship. The terms are mentally associated to such a high degree that it is desirable to provide a link between them to indicate that the other term may be of interest to the user. The terms tend to be used somewhat interchangeably or have meanings that overlap to an extent. The relationship is reciprocal, and is explicitly coded in the record for each of the related terms. *Example:*

Census data
RT Vital statistics

Vital statistics
RT Census data

  [Census data refers to official counts of the population, while vital statistics are official public records of births, deaths, etc.]

There is a restriction on related terms. Terms that begin with the same word or word stem may not be linked because of their proximity to each other in alphabetical arrangements. For example, **Ethnographic films** and **Ethnographic radio programs** may not be linked with RT references.

Scope notes (SN)

Scope notes are single-sentence definitions that are intended to help catalogers maintain consistency in the way that the term is assigned, and to help users determine whether the term covers the material that they seek. Generally, scope notes are provided when a term may be unfamiliar to most users, or when reference sources disagree on the meaning of a term and the term must therefore be defined for the LCGFT context. *Examples:*

Official gazettes
SN This heading is used as a genre/form heading for official journals that promulgate laws and that often include regulations, public notices, and other official announcements.

Peep shows (Motion pictures)
SN This heading is used as a genre/form heading for short films intended to be viewed through a small hole or magnifying glass.

Contrasting scope notes may also be provided when two or more authorized terms are closely related or overlapping in meaning. One sentence is provided for each term being contrasted, and reciprocal notes are provided for all of the affected terms. *Example:*

Military films

SN This heading is used as a genre/form heading for films that feature the military lifestyle and loyalty to the armed forces and its codes and are generally set during peacetime. Films that feature military conflicts are entered under War films.

War films

SN This heading is used as a genre/form heading for films that feature military conflicts. Films that feature the military lifestyle and loyalty to the armed forces and its codes and are generally set during peacetime are entered under Military films.

Most terms in LCGFT do not have scope notes because their meaning is clear without one (e.g., **Documentary films**). In some cases, including a scope note would unduly limit the term's usefulness. For example, if the scope note for **Action and adventure films** listed six characteristics, a film that displayed only five of them could be not be assigned that term, even if it is clear that the film is intended to be of that genre. Not including the scope note allows catalogers to use judgment instead of requiring them to apply case law.

APPLICATION OF TERMS

The general procedures for assigning genre/form terms are described below. Specific rules for the assignment of terms to moving images and radio programs are provided in the *Subject Headings Manual*, instruction sheets H 1913, Moving Image Genre/Form Terms, and H 1969.5, Radio Genre/Form Headings.

Multiple terms, one per field, are assigned to bring out the genres and forms applicable to a work or expression. Terms are never subdivided. A comedic detective film is assigned two genre/form terms, **Comedy films** and **Detective and mystery films**. Similarly, a road atlas is assigned **Road maps** and **Atlases**.

Works and expressions are often represented through different manifestations. A film may be originally released in theaters, for example, and then made available on DVD. In these cases, the original release parameters should be observed where known. The descriptive elements bring out the manifestation being cataloged – the DVD – while the genre/form terms reflect the film itself.

Likewise, LCGFT does not replace subject headings, which remain an important method for leading users to the materials of interest to them. Subject headings should be assigned according to the rules for the subject vocabulary being used.

Examples:

Title: Harry Potter and the sorcerer's stone
  600 10 $a Potter, Harry $c (Fictitious character) $v Drama.
  650 #0 $a Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry (Imaginary organization) $v Drama.
  650 #0 $a Magic $v Drama.
  650 #0 $a Wizards $v Drama.
  655 #7 $a Fantasy films. $2 lcgft
  655 #7 $a Feature films. $2 lcgft
  655 #7 $a Fiction films. $2 lcgft
  655 #7 $a Film adaptations. $2 lcgft
  [*Physical description:* 2 videodiscs (152 min.) : sd., col. ; 4 3/4 in.]

Title: Charles Lindbergh: the Lone Eagle
  600 10 $a Lindbergh, Charles A.$q (Charles Augustus), $d 1902-1974.
  650 #0 $a Air pilots $z United States $v Biography.
  655 #7 $a Biographical films. $2 lcgft
  655 #7 $a Documentary films. $2 lcgft
  655 #7 $a Feature films. $2 lcgft
  655 $7 $a Nonfiction films. $2 lcgft
  [*Physical description:* 1 videodisc (72 min.) : sd., col. and b&w ; 4 3/4 in.]

Title: Understanding postnatal depression
  650 #0 $a Postpartum depression.
  650 #0 $a Childbirth $x Psychological aspects.
  650 #0 $a Mothers $x Psychology.
  650 #0 $a Mothers $x Mental health.
  655 #0 $a Documentary films. $2 lcgft
  655 #7 $a Nonfiction films. $2 lcgft
  655 #7 $a Internet videos. $2 lcgft
  [*Physical description:* 1 streaming video file (22 min.) : digital, sd., col.]

Title: The Simpsons : the complete seventh season
  650 #0 $a Simpsons (Fictitious characters) $v Drama.
  650 #0 $a Families $v Drama.
  655 #7 $a Television comedies. $2 lcgft
  655 #7 $a Animated television programs. $2 lcgft
  655 #7 $a Fiction television programs. $2 lcgft
  [*Physical description:* 4 videodiscs (571 min.) : sd., col. ; 4 3/4 in.]

Title: The Shadow : two complete radio adventures
  650 #0 $a Vigilantes $v Drama.
  655 #7 $a Detective and mystery radio programs. $2 lcgft
  [*Physical description:* 1 sound disc (1 hr.) : analog, 33 1/3 rpm ; 12 in.]

Title: Atlas linguarum Europae : ALE
   650 #0 $a Europe $x Languages $v Maps.
   655 #7 $a Linguistic atlases. $2 lcgft

Title: Europe : atlas routier et touristique = Europe : tourist and motoring atlas
   650 #0 $a Roads $z Europe $v Maps.
   655 #7 $a Road maps. $2 lcgft
   655 #7 $a Tourist maps. $2 lcgft
   655 #7 $a Atlases. $2 lcgft

Title: Cram's imperial world globe
   651 #0 $a Earth (Planet) $v Maps.
   655 #7 $a Globes. $2 lcgft

Title: Administrative law and regulatory policy : problems, text, and cases
   650 #0 $a Administrative law $z United States $v Cases.
   655 #7 $a Casebooks. $2 lcgft

Title: International Court of Justice : digest of judgments and advisory opinions …
   610 20 $a International Court of Justice.
   650 #0 $a International law $v Cases.
   655 #7 $a Court decisions and opinions. $2 lcgft

Title: Best Irish walks.
   650 #0 $a Hiking $z Ireland $v Guidebooks.
   651 #0 $a Ireland $v Guidebooks.
   655 #7 $a Guidebooks. $2 lcgft

Title: First name reverse dictionary : given names listed by meaning.
   650 #0 $a Names, Personal $v Dictionaries.
   655 #7 $a Reverse dictionaries. $2 lcgft

PRODUCTS

Five services provide information about new and revised genre/form terms.

1. **MARC Distribution Service**. Genre/form terms are distributed as part of the MARC Distribution Service Subject-Authorities product that provides records in MARC 21 and MARCMXL formats via FTP. This fee-based subscription service provides new and updated records on a weekly basis to supplement the master database of subject authority records.
2. **Monthly Lists**. New and changed genre/form terms appear on *LC Subject Headings Monthly Lists*, which are posted on the World Wide Web at http://www.loc.gov/aba/cataloging/subject/weeklylists; free subscriptions to the *Monthly Lists*, via e-mail or RSS feed, can be arranged at http://www.loc.gov/rss.
3. **Classification Web**. *Library of Congress Genre/Form Terms for Library and Archival Materials* is included in *Classification Web*, a fee-based World Wide Web service that also provides access to *Library of Congress Subject Headings* and *Library of Congress Classification*.
4. **LC Authorities**. Genre/form records are included in LC Authorities http://authorities.loc.gov, a free web-based database that allows for browsing, display, and download (in MARC 21 format) of the authority records.
5. **LC Linked Data Service**. Genre/form records are included in the LC Linked Data Service http://id.loc.gov, a free-web based service that allows for browsing, display, and bulk download (in various formats) of the authority records.

COVERAGE

The genre/form list contains 847 terms established through January 2015.

CONTACT

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